

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SPC-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10 RSC-01

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 IGA-02

COME-00 AGR-20 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DRC-01

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R 060815Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1572

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH FOOD GRAIN NEEDS

REF: A. DACCA 4867 B. DACCA 4939 C. STATE 236264

1. HOSSAIN ALI'S FOODGRAIN IMPORT REQUIREMENT OF 2.0 MILLION TONS FOR CY 1974 MUCH HIGHER THAN FOODGRAIN DEFICIT REPORTED IN RECENTLY ISSUED FIVE YEAR PLAN OF 1.2 MILLION TONS FOR FY 1974 AND 490,000 MT FOR FY 1975. AGREE THAT 500,000 MT IMPORTS BARRING ANY SERIOUS EMERGENCIES, MORE PROBABLE.

2. DISCUSSION OF LOCAL PROCUREMENT PROSPECTS FROM CURRENT AMAN CROP INCLUDED REFTELS AND AGR REPORT BD-3055, BDG IS PLACING "HEAVY EMPHASIS" ON PROCUREMENT BUT PROGRAM STARTED VERY LATE WITH PROCUREMENT PRICES ANNOUNCED AFTER HARVEST HAD BEGUN. ALSO, MANY PROBLEMS REMAIN UNRESOLVED AS TO COLLECTION, ORGANIZATION, LOGISTICS INCLUDING MOVEMENT OF PADDY TO MILLS WITH SURPLUS CAPACITY, PAYMENT TO FARMERS, ABSORPTION OF DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN TA 73 PLUS HANDLING PER MAUND AND CURRENT ISSUE PRICE OF TA 40 PER MAUND, AND CONTROL OF ILLEGAL EXPORTS. FYI A MAUND OF RICE DELIVERED TO BDG AT TA 73 COULD BE SOLD IN INDIA FOR SUFFICIENT TO BUY AT LEAST FOUR LUNGIS OR TWO SARIS WHICH COULD

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RETURN OVER TA 160. END FYI.

3. THE BDG HAS NOT ANNOUNCED ANY PLANS TO DISCONTINUE THE STATUTORY AND MODIFIED RATION SYSTEMS GUARANTEEING CHEAP FOOD-GRAINS TO URBAN WORKERS AND TO THOSE IN AREAS OF SHORT SUPPLY. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE BDG WILL SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE ISSUE PRICE. IF IT WAS CONTEMPLATED, THIS WOULD BE THE OPPORTUNE TIME WITH THE HARVEST OF A BUMPER RICE CROP. EVEN WITH PROCUREMENT (OUR ROUGH ESTIMATE OF PROCUREMENT IS 200,000 MT MILLED RICE BASIS), IMPORTED FOODGRAINS WILL BE NECESSARY TO MEET OFFTAKE COMMITMENTS. THE FOODGRAIN SITUATION TRADITIONALLY BECOMES TIGHTER DURING THE MARCH/APRIL BORO HARVEST MONTHS.

4. WITH PROSPECTS OF OBTAINING LESS THAN HALF THEIR STATED REQUIREMENT FOR IMPORTED FOODGRAINS, IMPOSSIBLE CONSIDER STOCK BUILDUP FROM IMPORTS. BDG OFFICIALS AWARE OF US UNWILLINGNESS BUILD UP FOODGRAIN STOCKPILES WITH CONCESSIONAL FINANCING. NEWBERRY

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